

HB 1360 - DIGEST

Declares that the purpose of this act is to create a system of clean elections for state office campaigns through public financing, thereby focusing campaigns on issues and away from the sources of campaign contributions. Public financing of campaigns will limit the influence of large contributors and special interests in political campaigns.

Provides that a candidate who wishes to receive public campaign funds must: (1) File an application with the commission declaring his or her intent to participate in the program as candidate for political office. The application must be filed before or during the qualifying period. The application must identify the candidate, the office that the candidate plans to seek, and the candidate's party, if any. In the application, the candidate shall affirm that only one political committee, identified with its treasurer, shall handle all contributions, expenditures, and obligations for the publicly financed candidate and that the candidate will comply with the requirements of this act and rules adopted by the commission; and

(2) Obtain the minimum number of qualifying contributions by the end of the qualifying period. Candidates for the legislature must obtain at least two hundred qualifying contributions, candidates for governor must obtain at least four thousand qualifying contributions, and candidates for other state executive offices must obtain at least one thousand five hundred qualifying contributions. No payment, gift, or anything of value may be given for a qualifying contribution. A qualifying contribution must be: (a) made by a resident who at the time of the contribution resides in the electoral district of the office the candidate is seeking; (b) made by a person who is not given anything of value in exchange for the qualifying contribution; (c) in the sum of five dollars, exactly; (d) received during the qualifying period by the candidate or on behalf of the candidate; and (e) made by check, money order, or credit card.

Provides that, within five business days after a publicly financed candidate's name is approved to appear on the primary election ballot in a contested election, the commission shall distribute to the account of the authorized committee of each candidate who qualifies for public campaign funding revenue from the citizens public campaign fund as follows: (1) For state legislative offices, twenty-five thousand dollars;

(2) For the office of governor, five hundred thousand dollars; and

(3) For other state executive offices, fifty thousand dollars.

Requires that publicly financed candidates in contested races must participate in two public debates during a primary

election period and two public debates during a general election period. The debates shall be conducted at times decided by the commission and in accordance with rules prescribed by the commission. Nonparticipating candidates shall be invited to participate in the debates.